

PREFACE

THIS volume is the first of a series giving the results of work carried out in the years 1914 and 1915 in the Small Islands off the north-east coast of Malekula in the New Hebrides, one of the chain of Melanesian archipelagos stretching from New Guinea to Fiji and lying roughly parallel to the north-east coast of Australia at a distance of some 1000 miles. I had intended to make a longer stay, but the Great War intervened, and since then a number of circumstances have combined to prevent earlier publication. Choice of the Small Islands as a useful place to carry out field-work was due partly to the fact that a previously planned expedition to New Guinea in company with Dr. Haddon had fallen through, and partly to the influence of the late Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, who had just finished his *History of Melanesian Society* and wished to take the opportunity afforded by the meeting of the British Association in Australia in the summer of 1914, which we both attended, to continue the study of Melanesia, and asked me to go with him. At that time great interest was being aroused by theories of megalithic migration into the Pacific. Codrington had already called attention to the stone-work on Gau in the Banks Islands. Though the culture responsible for the erection of those monuments had long disappeared, new evidence had, however, just come to light of a living megalithic culture through the publication by Dr. (now Professor) Felix Speiser of the results of an expedition to the Northern New Hebrides, where he recorded the existence of numerous megalithic monuments such as dolmens and monoliths still being erected by the natives in the course of their rites. 131

One of the chief centres of this megalithic culture was the group of small coral islets called the Small Islands already mentioned. It was therefore to these that, with the kind assistance of Mr. (later Sir) Merton King, then Resident Commissioner, Rivers and I eventually made our way. Rivers, however, after staying about a week, left for a Mission station on the island of Tangoa off the south coast of Santo, and I never saw him again in the islands save for a brief meeting on his way home. I stayed behind on one of the Small Islands called Atchin, where my chief field-work was carried out. 121

It soon became clear that the culture of these islands was far from simple, and that, on account of their situation midway between two main cultural areas, as well as of their favourable climatic position, they were a meeting-place where much culture contact had occurred, and was indeed still taking place. The instability resulting from this contact showed itself most clearly with regard to the two main elements of culture in these islands, namely in the matter of kinship, in which considerable changes were taking place, leading to not infrequent wars 177 •

177 on account of new influences affecting the regulation of marriage, and
121 above all in the megalithic ritual, new forms of which were constantly
being acquired from further south.

121 Expeditions to other islands confirmed this initial impression of a
184 northward movement of culture, and it was for this reason that, as part
of an effort to establish a historical sequence of cultures, I turned my
attention to the most northerly islet of this group, namely Vao. There
I found an earlier form of kinship structure in which, despite the uni-
formly patrilocal nature of all Small Island culture, the matrilineal
element received more overt expression than in those islets further south
where patrilineal influence is being constantly reinforced by the same
cultural drift as is responsible for the new forms of megalithic ritual.
The same matrilineal element also dominated the mortuary rites, show-
ing that these also belonged to an older layer of culture than those in
the remaining Small Islands. It is for this reason that, despite the fact
that my main field-work was carried out on Atchin, I propose to devote
this first volume to Vao in order to supply a firm historical basis for the
accounts to be given in later volumes of the more recent developments
of megalithic culture in this region.

122 For hospitality during my visits to Vao, where I did not, as on Atchin,
live in native quarters, I am indebted to the kindness and real friendship
of Père Jamond of the Marist Mission, at that time Roman Catholic
priest on that island, where he had lived alone for over nine years. Our
first meeting had been one of unveiled hostility on his part, since he
had heard exaggerated accounts of my performances in native dances
on Atchin, of which he severely disapproved. But once that little diffi-
culty had been overcome and he recognised a fellow-student of native
culture, our friendship quickly ripened, and he was indeed the only
white man in the islands with whom I felt I could speak about native
matters on equal terms. He was a keen philologist, spoke Vao well
(which he described as being "*aussi beau que le français*"), and had com-
piled a considerable dictionary of the language. His flock, however,
was small, consisting for the most part of a few old men and young
children, and the majority of the population was quite untouched by
Mission influence, the natives of all the Small Islands having at that
time, despite the presence of Missions of several denominations, for the
most part definitely turned their faces against any form of Christianity.
Nevertheless, owing to his humour and understanding and quite obvious
sincerity, the natives regarded him with affection, and in cases of trouble
with white men, not only the natives of Vao but even those from other
islands ostensibly belonging to other Missions often sought his aid.

While fully conscious of the pitfalls attending a comparatively short
stay under such conditions, these were, however, considerably minimised
by the fact that, as known to the Vao natives, I had lived half a year

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sacrifice was still practised in the Small Islands on certain ritual occasions till put a stop to by the white man, and is still practised on the Malekulan mainland, this does not form part of the ritual of the Maki itself, which, by the substitution of tusked boars, is held by the natives to constitute the main force in their culture making for peace. 782

Details of the procedure accompanying the sacrifice of these animals will be given in later chapters. This brief summary of their ritual importance is given here only to explain the immense value attached to them and the amount of time and care spent in their rearing. Not only are they reared at home, however; for trade in pigs is also the chief motive for the voyages undertaken by the Small Islanders in their sea-going canoes to the distant islands of Oba and Raga to the east, to Malo in the north as well as southward to Ambim and the east coast of Malekula. 782
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Tusked boars are also used, while alive, as currency. For, despite the elaborate ritual life that goes on in these islands, the Malekulan, not excluding the Small Islander, is nothing if not commercially minded, driving hard bargains, exacting the highest possible price for his daughters from their suitors, lending pigs out on loan, receiving high fees for the performance of magical rites, cures and other services; and, above all, in one of the most interesting ways of amassing wealth, namely the institution of copyright by which new songs and dances and even new forms of ritual are passed on from one individual or community to another on payment of high prices in pigs regulated according to the elongation of their tusks, without which payment not even the smallest element of ritual or artistic culture may be acquired by those not having previously possessed it. 231
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New forms of the rite introduced from Lawor and Bot-walim.

This custom in turn enormously enhances the commercial importance of prestige, and itself largely results from the extraordinary mixture of cultures existing in these islands. For it is a fact well known to the inhabitants of every Malekulan village that hardly a single element of megalithic culture is indigenous. Every village has its own stories of where such and such an element of culture came from, and in the Small Islands it is known for a considerable number of generations back precisely what individual "bought" it and from where. 184
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I have already mentioned the acquiring of the highest ranks in the megalithic hierarchy in South-West Bay from the village of Lambumbu some twenty miles up the coast. For the Small Islands the centre of distribution of innumerable new forms of ritual during the past eight generations has been the two villages of Lawor and Bot-walim which formerly flourished on the Malekulan mainland opposite Wala, but are now extinct owing to the bloody fighting that resulted from the first

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177 introduction of firearms to the natives by unscrupulous Whites, whereby the Small Islanders, who were the first to acquire these weapons, succeeded in exterminating almost the whole of the once numerous population inhabiting the villages on the adjacent Malekulan coast.¹ This tragedy, now bitterly regretted by the Small Islanders themselves, has prevented any further enquiry as to how these two villages themselves acquired the rites. I do not know the actual date of this extermination. It cannot, however, have occurred very long ago, and in the generations preceding it a mass of ritual practices emanating from these two villages had already been acquired by Wala, whence a great deal has since been acquired in turn by Atchin but only a certain amount by Vao, and that only by the villages on one side of this island. This is one of the reasons why, as stated in the Preface, I have chosen Vao as the subject for this first volume in order to establish the historical sequence of cultures on these islands. Where this megalithic culture came from it is not the business of this work to discuss, and, except as regards a few outstanding features, the historical aspect of the problem is not mentioned.

Genealogical records and their connexion with stone monuments.

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769
796 One relevant fact must nevertheless be mentioned because of its effect on the natives' own outlook. This is the sense of historical continuity possessed by the natives of the Small Islands, in which they differ notably from any other known tribes in this part of Melanesia, and which is expressed and fostered by their extensive orally transmitted genealogical records. I have already called attention to the fact that the cycle of rites comprising one performance of the Maki lasts approximately a generation, and to the stone monuments erected during each such performance. These monuments are never removed, and remain as a perpetual memorial of those who set them up. Each such performance is moreover distinguished from all others by some outstanding feature by means of which those taking part in it hope to eclipse in magnificence all previous performances; either by the acquirement of some new form of ritual or in the grandeur of the stones erected or, most impressive of all, by the number of boars sacrificed and by their value in terms of the elongation of their tusks. It is as a rule in accordance with this latter form of emulation that each Maki performance is named, these names, such as "The Circle-Tusker" or "The Five Hundred," referring to the quality or number of boars sacrificed, being treasured by the natives of each village as part of the historical heritage enhancing their own prestige. Not only is each Maki remembered, however, but also the leading men who organised it and carried it through, by means of the monoliths erected and at which some of the chief tuskers are sacrificed. Details of these sacrifices are also remembered, since, with

¹ See p. 602.

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264 stories of men who have acquired such superlatively high Maki rank—
 562 there are none living now—that they have been strong enough, not with-
 554 out raising such storms in the community as almost to wreck it, to break
 the taboo and re-establish, for themselves alone, spiritual contact with
 the mother's milk by eating from the same fire as women.¹ Such men
 who have completed the circle between childhood and divinity are
 regarded with awe and terror as being almost equal to ghosts.

264 It is well, therefore, to wait until the meal is over, the pipes lighted,²
 276 and, with the gathering twilight lit up by moon and stars and by the
 smouldering fire, to approach with some casual appropriate remark and
 then sit down and listen, not with the head only, but, as the natives say,
 the "belly," or what we should call the heart.

Debates.

521 Another type of meeting from which women are excluded but which
 626 the circumspect stranger may attend is that of the debates, which in fine
 weather are held in the dancing-ground or in wet weather in the *ghamal*.
 These are described by Godefroy³ as being either "small" debates, which
 are a kind of communal recreation when a little is said about everything,
 or "grand" debates, announced by the sounding of gongs. Such "grand"
 debates are held only on important occasions, when, for example, a
 woman has eloped or some insult has been perpetrated against one of
 the influential members of the clan, or else to announce the date of some
 rite, or because certain old men wish to summon an offender before this
 the only tribunal that exists.

626 If held in the dancing-ground, each member of the clan takes his
 place at the correct spot indicated by his rank. The oldest members take
 up their position on the Upper Side, close to the gongs; if there are five
 or six of them, they squat on their heels, in the form of a square; three
 paces behind, towards the middle of the ground, sit those one rank
 inferior to that of the old men; yet further off, and separated by the same
 distance from those superior to them, are a group of young men; finally,
 that of the older boys. All speak in a low voice, though the elders talk
 rather more loudly than the rest. They discuss the subject of their
 meeting.

¹ The story of one such will be told in a later volume on Atchin.

² A European innovation, hand-maiden of the trader who, by creating this arti-
 ficial craving which occupies some of the native's surplus energy now that his work
 in the gardens has been so notably lightened by the introduction of iron, has established
 a tobacco-currency which, as the natives themselves despairingly say, "goes up in
 smoke," and must be eternally renewed, for the white man's profit.

³ Godefroy, I, 1933, pp. 40-1. The word for these debates in his spelling is
sisilakuaran, from the verb *sisilakuar*. The Atchin equivalent is the verb *tsil-tsilewere*,
 whence on that island I had conferred on me the half-joking title of Melteg-tsilewere
 on account of my long sessions with informants. (Melteg is one of the titles conferred
 on men of high rank in the Maki, see pp. 289, 432.)

PIGS

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nothing to bite against, continue their upward growth.¹ Following their natural curve, they then curl backwards, and then downwards, piercing the cheek and then the jaw. The jaw is no obstacle, for, growing now forwards again through the bone, they finally emerge once more, each having completed a whole circle, with the tip of the tusk just inside the spot at which it first appeared. When the tusk has pushed its way up for the second time so that its tip is visible outside the animal's lip, it is considered perfect from a ritual point of view. This is, however, by no means the highest possible stage of growth. Tusks so treated can, with luck and good management, be induced to describe two complete circles, and there are cases in which they have been known to describe three. During my stay on Vao there was one highly valued beast which had attained this triple distinction.²

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Tusked boar the natives' sacrificial animal.

The motive behind the tremendous labour and endless care lavished to produce these results is a religious one, since the prime value of the pig with artificially elongated tusks lies in the fact that it is the sacrificial animal, through the slaying of which, with due ritual, a man attains life after death.³

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The manner in which this is accomplished, and the endless ramifications, both ritual and commercial, resulting from this belief, will be dealt with in due place. It must suffice here to point out that the whole process involves the identification of the sacrificer with the victim, and that since, in this strongly patrilineal society, men only have souls and have the right to sacrifice, only male pigs are so treated.

Gelded pigs.

Male pigs are, however, of two kinds, gelded and not gelded. The practice of gelding pigs is probably due to a compromise between religious ideology and gastronomical considerations. For an essential aspect of sacrifice is that the victim should also be eaten. But the most valued tusked boars are always old; moreover, the pain attendant on the passage of their tusks through the jaw is not conducive to that state of contentment which would enable them to put on flesh. The result is that, apart from their tusks, they are, as a rule, nothing but skin and bones. Partly owing

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¹ This operation will be fully described in a future volume on Atchin. A brief account by Père Godfroy is quoted on p. 239 of the present volume.

² See p. 247, footnote 1.

³ Fowls also are sacrificed (see p. 390), but do not of themselves confer new life. Recent innovations also include the sacrifice of animals introduced by the white man, such as young bullocks obtained from planters—I saw, and will describe in a future volume, one such sacrifice on Atchin—though such innovations are not approved of by the old men. On Ambirim another introduced animal known to have been sacrificed is the dog.

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501 on these trips they have come to be known also as war canoes. One of their chief other uses was to barter for the turmeric essential as a basic dye for all coloured articles of clothing, obtained exclusively from Malo and South Santo.

These canoes had four (sometimes apparently five, but never six) booms, the distinctive arrangement of which was that they were all placed close to one another amidships. This arrangement was due to the fact that, unlike the small coastal canoes which have only one bow and are paddled always in the same direction, the sea-going canoes were constructed so as to be able to sail in both directions, having a bow at both ends, so that the booms had to be placed symmetrically to allow the vessel to be reversed at will. Owing to the sacred nature of the pig trade for which they were chiefly used,¹ the sea-going canoes were consecrated by the sacrifice of tusked boars with all its attendant dances and rites, and from the moment of consecration women might neither touch nor enter them. This consecration was similar in its main aspects to the Maki rite, and conferred upon the vessel itself the grade of the chief boar sacrificed, in just the same way as the sacrificer in the Maki rite adopts the grade of the victim he slays.²

Substitution of European "whalers" for sea-going canoes.

[17] Of late years (and this was already the case at the date of my visit in 1914) the natives have preferred to save themselves the trouble of building sea-going canoes, and have taken to buying white man's "whalers" instead. The same consecration rites and the same taboos are, however, performed for the new "whalers" as for the old sea-going canoes. It was my good fortune to witness, and take photographs of, one such consecration of a "whaler" on Atchin, a detailed description of which will be reserved for a future volume. Godefroy, however, also witnessed similar scenes on Vao, which he briefly describes, and which are given below.

Two types of sea-going canoes. Probable former existence of double canoes.

It is said that there were formerly two types of sea-going canoe in use on Vao:

(1) *Nu-wak ghe-ru*. I was told of this only the last day I was on Vao, and was therefore unable to follow the statement up, as I had intended. It is interesting to note, however, that the word *ghe-ru* means "two."

¹ The cultural connexion between pigs and sea-going canoes will be discussed in a future volume on Atchin. Meanwhile, it is worth while noting Deacon's description of a rite connected with the graded society on Oba in which a canoe furnished with a mat sail is placed on a stone "tower" to commemorate the coming of the first pigs from Malo to Oba (Deacon, 3, pp. 497-8).

² See p. 258.

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in the path between the two villages would be the usual place for the opposing forces to meet and fight it out.

By far the most important combats, however, were those taking place between the two Sides of the Island. For these not only had a special fighting-ground at the junction of their respective territories on the beach called Le-siwar, but this beach was also furnished with a stone fort, where it was the custom of the defenders to await attack. This fort, called *titimba*, consisted of a single surrounding stone wall, but is unfortunately no longer extant, the Roman Catholic Mission having been established, ironically enough, on the site.

Special fighting-grounds of this type are reported by Deacon from South-West Bay (between the districts of Mewun and Seniang),¹ and from other parts of Melanesia.² The only stone forts I know of, however, are those reported by Codrington from Ysabel in the Solomon Islands, built on a rocky knoll in the midst of the village for protection against head-hunters.³ So far as I know, therefore, the Vao fort is the only one recorded in Melanesia as being specially built for formal combat.

Brief Summary of a Formal Combat on Atchin

Apart from a brief reference given on p. 606, I have unfortunately no full accounts of such formal fighting on Vao, no battles of this nature having taken place for some time owing to the Government ban on warfare, which, while still being carried on safely on the mainland, can no longer be prosecuted on a Small Island with a resident missionary. I did, however, witness one such pitched battle in modified form on Atchin, which will be described in detail in a future volume, but of which I will here give a few salient points to illustrate the type of action.

The immediate cause of the trouble occurred during an all-night dance connected with initiation, when the torch carried by one of the hosts was knocked by a third party, also a host, in such a way that the sparks fell in a shower on to the head of the torch-bearer's wife's brother, an important guest from the other Side of the Island. The guest raised his arm to brush off the sparks, but, as this action caused the club he was carrying to be raised also, the torch-bearer thought he was about to strike, and, to save himself, thrust his torch into the guest's face, narrowly missing his eyes. Uproar ensued, clubs were raised, spears brandished and stones thrown. Meanwhile the alarm signal was sounded on the gongs, and at the sight of reinforcements for the hosts the guests made their escape into the neighbouring bush. From here they continued to hurl imprecations at the hosts, some of whom heartily replied, while others, old men, did their utmost to restrain the blood lust of both sides. Finally,

¹ Deacon, 4, p. 223.

² Codrington, 3, p. 302.

³ Wedgwood, 1, pp. 9 and 16 ff.

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648 made on these islands, especially on Oba, and so highly prized by the Small Islanders. For this reason, the visits more often than not pass off without untoward incident. But there is always the possibility that, lacking any kinship ties, the inhabitants, owing to some dispute over pigs, or some chance slight on their dignity, may turn hostile. So the Small Islanders always go fully armed, and place sentries round about the Lodge to warn them of possible danger.

Ambrim, East Malekula, Malo, Santo.

The same is true, to a slightly lesser extent, of expeditions to Ambrim, where they go also to trade in pigs, and to that part of the east coast of Malekula which is outside the Small Island cultural area as far south as Port Sandwich, which at the present day is the most southerly point to which voyages are made. It was from Unua, on this coast, that the natives of Vao obtained, by payment of pigs, the human victim sacrificed on the erection of a former *ghamal* at Pete-hul.¹ To the north, Malo and Santo are visited for the sake of obtaining the turmeric leaves used in the dying of the red mats manufactured in the Small Islands.² So far as I know, no initiation rite is practised by the Small Islanders on these islands, nor are there any special Lodges affording diplomatic immunity, and the Small Islanders have to rely on friendship and the self-interest of the inhabitants not to attack them.

INTRODUCTION OF FIREARMS BY EUROPEANS

CAUSING WHOLESALE MASSACRES AND THE VIRTUAL
EXTINCTION OF THE ONCE FLOURISHING POPULATION OF
THE ADJACENT MALEKULAN MAINLAND

177 The last chapter in the chequered war history of these islands has
411 reversed all precedents. This has been due to the introduction of muskets
439 into the islands by white men. From the first arrival of the sandalwood
traders about a century ago down to the present time the natives all over
the group have been provided with shot-guns and rifles—all commonly
referred to as muskets—which have been sold to them, partly in exchange
for land or in return for coconuts or for direct payment in coin, and partly,
in the early days apparently, out of a deliberate attempt to promote war
for the sake of creating a demand for cartridges sold at exorbitant prices.
The Condominium agreement of 1906 included a clause forbidding such
sales, but the sales still go on. The result is that, for decades past, almost
177 every adult male in the group, at any rate in the Small Islands and
726 Malekula, has possessed a gun, and still does. Now that there is a

¹ See p. 451.

² See p. 456.

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certain amount of control along the coastal regions, these weapons, while part of the normal equipment of the natives, as formerly were clubs and spears, do comparatively little damage. When they first appeared, however, it was but natural that the natives inhabiting the coastal districts, who had the first opportunity of acquiring them, were unable to resist the power thus put into their hands and used these new weapons not only against one another, but also against their traditional enemies further inland. These, lacking the means to defend themselves against this unknown and deadly form of attack, were in this way slaughtered in such numbers that it was impossible any more to equalise the number of dead. Whereas in the old days the number of dead in any given war was rarely more than two or three on either side, and, if the victors wanted peace, the discrepancy in numbers seldom demanded more than the sacrifice of one victim on their part, once muskets had been introduced the discrepancy became so great that all rules of warfare were abandoned, and wholesale massacres took place.

In this way, during the latter part of the nineteenth century the Small Islanders practically wiped out the whole population of what was once a flourishing district containing innumerable villages immediately inland from the adjacent Malekulan coast. The sites of these villages, including that of the mainland village of Tolamp, are now pointed out in what is thick jungle. Not only were the mainland villages thus decimated, however. The same tragedy occurred even in warfare between two Sides of each individual Small Island. The first villages to acquire muskets were in all cases those situated on the "Superior" Side of each Island, which, being in possession of the best beaches, were the first to come into contact with white men. These muskets they then used against the members of the other Side of their own Island, with the result that the villages on the "Inferior" Side were severely handled. This was the case with the two villages of Emil Marur and Emil Lep on Atchin, both of which were nearly wiped out.

The more far-seeing of the Small Islanders now bitterly regret these suicidal ravages which have so seriously reduced their numbers in face of the growing menace of the whites. But the measure of their regret still depends, however, on the degree of kinship ties between themselves and their victims. For, while muskets are now with common consent banned in warfare against their fellow Small Islanders, they are still used against the few remaining inhabitants of the adjacent mainland. Thus, no native will think of going to his garden on the mainland unless fully armed, and muskets are part of the normal equipment taken on every ceremonial visit to another Small Island, lest during the dance some hostile outbreak occur.¹

¹ For the degrading influence of the musket on native warfare see also Wedgwood, 1, p. 33, and Harrison, 2.

who had returned to his own people and was busy reviving the fortunes of his village in the same way. These two men were among my best informants, since they themselves were conscious learners from the older men and, like all learners, the most capable of passing on their knowledge.

Nor were the people of Atchin averse to using such aspects of the white man's material culture as would seem to them to further their interests. Though stone tools were still used for gardening and shell tools for carving, some natives possessed knives, but such things were not common, and the degradation in plastic art which everywhere followed on their introduction had, at the time of my visit, only recently begun to show itself. It seemed by the way, most curious to me that, with the tremendous labour of digging in hard ground with nothing better than hard-wood sticks, no white man had thought of introducing more efficient agricultural implements, but none such existed. The hard-earned white man's money obtained on distant excursions was used almost exclusively with two objects in view. One was the purchase of whaleboats to replace their former long-distance canoes in order to facilitate the trade in and exchange of pigs in other islands. The second, closely connected with it, had as its result the only real benefit conferred by the white man, indirectly and without his knowledge, on the native. When I arrived on Atchin I was surprised at the number of young men who spoke pidgin English. It was not till I had been some time on the island that the reason for this became apparent. One of the least desirable aspects of the social system in this and the neighbouring islands was polygamy which, since most of the older men had two wives, effectually prevented the younger men from marrying until a comparatively late age. Wives are bought with the most valuable currency known in Atchin, namely pigs. So the younger men seized the opportunity created by the system of indentured labour to sign on for three years, without, like other natives, running up debts at the trader's store, so that with the money thus earned they might, on their return, buy pigs with which to purchase wives. This wholly beneficial revolution in the social machinery was in full swing at the time of my visit, but Mr. Harrison tells me, and this is one of the most interesting points of comparison between then and now, that the old men have now turned tables on the young, and by devaluing the pig in terms of women and increasing the bride-price from eight or nine pigs to fifty or sixty, have thus restored the old equilibrium, and incidentally, presumably, their own authority. When we reflect upon the fact that the young men twenty-two years ago are the older men now we have a useful sidelight on one of the mechanisms governing the rise and fall of revolutions.

Another effect of the increased wealth in pigs thus gained was the elimination of the lower grades from the *Maki* hierarchy. This process was not primarily due to the wealth so gained, but, like so many other changes in native custom, was very much accentuated by it. In all other parts of Malekula the *Maki*, as has already been pointed out, is a graded hierarchy in which the grades are taken by individuals, and the taking of them demands great expenditure of pigs and other forms of wealth, so that when a man has reached the highest grade called *Mal* he is a very great man and jealous of his distinction. The tendency in such districts was consequently to increase the number of pre-

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liminary grades in order to enhance the dignity of those few who had reached the highest rank. In Atchin, on the other hand, owing to the communal nature of the rite and the mutual help afforded by every member of the village community to every other member, a contrary process was at work, the lower grades being already in process of elimination before the arrival of the white man. With the acquisition of the new wealth this process became speeded up, with the result that by the time of my visit they had all disappeared, so that each and every man, youth, and male piccaninny on the island who was capable of sacrificing a pig belonged to the grade *Mal*, much to the chagrin of those in other communities who had taken a lifetime achieving it. Even the older men on Atchin felt somewhat abashed by the general levelling-up, and, in order to assert their own superiority, a new supernumerary grade had been invented, called *Mel-teg*, literally "The *Mal* who stays at home," referring to the vows of abstinence taken after the *Maki*. It is amusing and significant to note that, according to Mr. Harrison, the young men have again asserted their equality and that now most men on Atchin possess the title *Mel-teg*, and apparently for the moment, in this respect at any rate, democracy has reasserted itself, for there is no record of any further supernumerary grade.

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The younger generation of natives made use of the white man's coming not only in the direction of freeing themselves from the domination of the older men. With the acute dramatic sense which is the essence of their culture they had also made up to some extent for other deprivations which the white man had brought about by using both him and his inventions for the enhancement of their already rich ritual life. Pantomimic representations of various aspects of the white man's activities had been incorporated into the dramatic repertory of the *na-leng* plays and dances, muskets were used to heighten the effect of ritual combats during the sex-initiatory expedition to Omba, into the more serious initiation rites on Atchin, in which hoaxes are performed on the initiates, more than one white man's *tour de force* was incorporated, and many of the masks and images were made lurid by means of Reckett's blue.

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It is however significant to note that, even in the case of such a wide departure from native tradition as the abandonment of the manufacture of their own long-distance canoes in favour of white men's whale-boats, the old consecration rites were still continued. At one such consecration rite at which I was present over sixty valuable tusked boars were sacrificed, and the supreme sacrifice was that of a bullock, obtained from a trader, for which all the complicated sacrificial ritual was performed; while in the pantomimic dances the skulls of a bullock and two goats were used as masks.

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One final word as to the causes of depopulation. At the time of my visit the population was on the decline. Of physical causes the chief was, as has been seen, the introduction of the musket which turned comparatively harmless semi-ritual combats into lethal battles. Second to this, the introduction of diseases, mainly of dysentery, which wiped out whole families. As to the psychological causes put forward by Rivers and others but denied by Mr. Harrison, all I am able to say quite definitely is that there was at that time a general belief among the older men and some of the young ones that the race was doomed. The old men remembered the day when native culture was the highest achievement of the human race as they conceived it. The appearance

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From the first missionary, John Williams, murdered in 1839, until the present day, these devoted men, working according to their own lights, meeting often with sudden death, have been the only influence for good and sanity of any sort; even had they accomplished nothing, the missionaries would be the best people in island history. It was not always the Mission who converted the people or disrupted the native civilization. It was the chaos of endless new unknown diseases, the fundamental cultural upset due to iron and firearms. In seeking protection from these and from the other whites who brought them, the natives came to the missionary. The early records of the group are a ghastly list of introduced diseases—scarlet fever, measles, consumption, smallpox, phthisis, gonorrhoea, whooping cough, influenza, diphtheria, meningitis—all fatal to these people. The population, particularly where it was much in contact with whites, was decimated. Their culture was based on a certain speed, rhythm, and age-cycle; the sudden death of artist, magician, or chief upset the whole. The old beliefs, ancient gods, counter-magics, and native herbs, could do nothing; so they turned to the white man's god, who must be stronger than their own. The new trend among the missionized people, as it gathers internal momentum, shows signs of turning against its instigators, the white missionaries. So far experiments in founding a native-run church have regularly failed. The new motive power is economic rather than religious; some revival of passive heathenism is an ingredient. The price of copra, regulated by the combines far away in Europe, has become in many ways the determining factor. During the period of my visit copra prices reached their lowest level. The missionized natives have become dependent on their coconuts to earn them money for knives, calico, tobacco, belts, even bread, rice, and tinned meat—the substitutes for "heathen" things that have become extinct through mission influence. Low prices mean little money and a standard of living reduced below the level of the last thirty years, in many ways below that of the heathen bushmen. This annoys the native against the white, who has created these demands and will not satisfy them; and a shirt has become the essential symbol of a mission native, to such an extent that without a shirt he feels no longer Christian. I doubt if the group has within sight an important economic future for the white man, despite the recent optimistic accounts of Archimbaud (1927) and Lop (1933). The Chinese and Japanese are rapidly gaining economic power; they may find in these fever- and cyclone-ridden islands an important outlet. Half-castes are not numerous. French ones rank equal with pure Frenchmen as citizens, and run many French plantations.

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Recently the administration have to some extent changed their policy, for example in relation to trouble within the native community and in appointing me to pacify the Big Nambas. The native will therefore expect more arbitration in future; if it is not provided, the administration will be discredited, to the danger of all whites.

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So the age-long cycle goes on. The native population was never stable, either in culture or in numbers. When Quiros came the population was about at a peak in the north; now it has reached a trough, on the interminable up and down of all races. It is time for the Melanesian to climb again. He is climbing wherever conditions are at all favourable. And the vital question

now, to those of us interested in the deeper aspects of human life, is whether the real bush Melanesian, still with some awareness of his own magnificent past, will start to climb again before it is too late. I believe that with a little help he too can be saved along with his already secure Christian brother.

Conservation of the Primitive Melanesian

The inland bush people of Santo, Malekula, and to a lesser extent Ambrym and Pentecost, are the least civilized natives in the Pacific to-day. A few places in the Solomons are comparable to some extent, while here and there in Polynesia, for example in the eastern Tuamotus, the old spirit remains under the new clothing. Elsewhere the "South-sea islander" is no longer anything like his old self. All Polynesia has reached the calico stage; in the New Hebrides the calico stage has not touched central Malekula; the stone age is quite finished everywhere. And in the east the boot age is dawning.

What should happen to these least-influenced Big Nambas, Laus, and Botowut folk? What will happen is an easier question. Unless some very vigorous and powerful person takes up the matter at once they will not be primitive any more. They will be extinct culturally through plantation and later-mission influence, when they have been finally reduced to near physical extinction by introduced epidemic diseases. I doubt anything can check the material superficial advance of our civilization. It may be possible in a well-run country like New Guinea. With the Condominium it is quite impracticable to have any complex plan.

(i) *Physical Conservation*.—The problem has two parts, physical and cultural conservation. That is why I am against isolation, which would now be no use in a part of the world where disease is the first enemy and where incompatible vested interests dominate. I am not in favour of Baker's (*Geogr. J.*, 1929) suggested reserve on Gaua. Gaua is a particularly unsuitable island because the natives are decadent, very missionized, and unhealthy; none of the old culture remains. The trouble is that an island like Gaua is already too isolated; it has all the evils and none of the good things of Europeanism. Even in 1896 Bishop Wilson (1932, p. 91) noted that "these people are akin to the rest of the Banks Islanders, and yet so greatly inferior; it is difficult to say why, and it is the same on both sides of the island." The detailed study made by Mrs. Baker and myself will be published elsewhere, and may explain why.

Similarly the inland tribes on the larger islands cannot be isolated from epidemics spreading up from the coast. If the bushmen were isolated to-day they would go on steadily dying out: not from the lack of the will to live or zest of life (the widely accepted theory first put forward by Rivers), but from definite diagnostic disease. The only way to preserve them as human beings, let alone in their semi-primitive state, is by immediate medical and hygienic action; by perhaps a party of tropical medical men, including native medical practitioners from Fiji. Eucalyptus, neokarsarvin, hookworm medicine, emetine are necessary. Even the wildest natives have heard about the wonderful benefits derived from these drugs. Lepers must be isolated. The administration should do this; partly through lack of funds its medical service does practically nothing; the missionaries do very useful work in a limited sphere,

chief's daughter has been given up for years, Atchin contradicts his theory in fact. Baker I think underestimates the vanity of the native.

The Atchinese are among the very few peoples friendly to the administration, and they now appeal at once for peaceful settlements to all disputes. In the old days they gave a lot of trouble, but living on a small island they found a warship was more significant to them than to the bushmen. War is no more, abortion uncommon; the older men consciously want the place to grow; and grow it does. Thus it was the Atchinese who drew my attention to the exorbitantly high pig payments demanded as bride price all over the area in recent years; with their support I was able to lower the price by 80 per cent., back to pre-white level, thus enabling young men to marry with only normal difficulty. Similarly these folk like European medicines for introduced diseases, but use their own for the endemic ones. Their pig transactions and graded-society (*Maki*) rites have been modified; some things have been taken away, others added, both from white and black sources.

Atchin dances are second only to those of Matanavat; they are kept up with exactitude and enthusiasm; also with new and often spontaneous variations in one type of the *na-leng*, the highest manifestation of Hebridean art and living. Sorcery and poison are no longer tolerated; the Atchinese are bitter against the adjacent island Vao for continuing these practices—bitter, but not disbelieving. Magic is not now important; old legends and stories, in which these people excel, are a part of daily life and juvenile instruction; the same myths collected by Layard and myself in 1914 and 1935 respectively agree perfectly, there has been no deterioration. The old burial rites and beliefs survive unimpaired.

In general the old customs that are savage or anti-social under modern conditions have disappeared, while those with business, religious, health, or play value have survived, even expanded. It is in this Europeanized heathenism, this intelligently primitive and adaptive but obstinate outlook, that the ancient Melanesian culture is most likely and able to survive. On Atchin to-day every village has its great drums, in lovely dancing glades, dolmens, carved human and bird effigies; a little distance away behind a native-style stone wall is a cluster of palm houses kept clean; at one corner perhaps a cement and iron house, the men's lodge, pride of the place. The women have more status, charm, freedom, and gaiety than elsewhere in the area.

I found the Atchinese charming people—and charm is a word I seldom think of applying to a Melanesian. They are thoroughly independent and sophisticated, combining Melanesian business ability with a more Polynesian intelligence and grace to direct it. The planters and missionaries have no good word to say for Atchin, which is an indication. Few tribes have had the good luck and intelligence to use the white man's things for their own advantage, in harmony with their own culture. I believe that what the Hebridean needs most to-day is guidance in this direction associated with simple medical aid. New education, religion and outlet are unnecessary and inadvisable now, and perhaps for some time to come. A few sympathetic men and women, without undue prejudice, could with a little money and many medicines work wonders. Atchin might well serve as a model in cultural adaptation. It